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## NOTES ON ORIENTAL ANTIQUITIES.

[PLATE V-VI, FIGS. 1-13.]

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### IV. THE RISING SUN ON BABYLONIAN CYLINDERS.

There is a peculiar little family of Babylonian cylinders which have thus far been, I think, misconceived, and which it will be well to bring together for study and comparison. They are those in which George Smith fancied he saw the building of the Tower of Babel, and in which I lately suggested (*Scribner's Monthly*, January, 1887, p. 89), following Ménant, that there were represented the gates of the under-world opening to receive the dead. Of these there are ten known to me as published, besides one of my own collection, now belonging to the Metropolitan Museum of New York. I give figures of them all, that the full data may be in the hands of the reader.<sup>1</sup>

I omit one cylinder with the "tower," and a deity, half man and half serpent (Lajard, *Culte de Mithra*, pl. XLII, fig. 13); also three in which the "tower" is winged at the top (*ibid.*, pl. XVIII, fig. 1; pl. XVIII, fig. 2 (Cullimore, *Oriental Cylinders*, No. 165); and pl. LIV, fig. 1). These

<sup>1</sup> They are reproduced from the following sources:

FIG. 1.—From SMITH, *Chaldean account of Genesis*, p. 159, upper figure (Sayce's revised edition, p. 162, second figure).

FIG. 2.—LAJARD, *Culte de Mithra*, pl. XXVIII, fig. 10 (MÉNANT, *Cyl. Or. à la Haye*, fig. 15; *Cyl. de la Chaldée*, p. 123, fig. 72).

FIG. 3.—MÉNANT, *Cyl. de la Chaldée*, p. 121, fig. 68.

FIG. 4.—*Collection de Clercq*, No. 85.

FIG. 5.—MÉNANT, *Cyl. de la Chaldée*, p. 123, fig. 71 (LONGPERIER, *Notice Antiq. Ass. du Louvre*, No. 540).

FIG. 6.—LAJARD, *op. cit.*, pl. XVIII, fig. 3.

FIG. 7.—LAJARD, *op. cit.*, pl. XI, fig. 8 (SMITH, *op. cit.*, p. 159, lower figure; or *ib.*, Sayce's revised edition, p. 162, lower figure).

FIG. 8.—LAJARD, *op. cit.*, p. XXVIII, fig. 15 (MÉNANT, *Cyl. Or. de la Haye*, fig. 16; *Cyl. de la Chaldée*, pl. III, fig. 3, and p. 122, fig. 69).

FIG. 9.—LAJARD, *op. cit.*, pl. XVIII, fig. 4 (SMITH, *op. cit.*, p. 158; or, *ibid.*, Sayce's revised edition, p. 162, upper figure; MÉNANT, *Cyl. de la Chaldée*, p. 122, fig. 70).

FIG. 10.—From my own collection, hitherto unpublished.

FIG. 11.—MÉNANT, *Cyl. de la Chaldée*, p. 121, fig. 67 (unfinished).

four cylinders must have a different meaning from those we are now considering, and are very difficult to understand.

What George Smith fancied to be a tower is correctly explained, by Ménant and others, as a gate. The projections for the sockets above and below, and the ornamental lion resting on it in one case, as also the bands across, as in the gates of Balawat, are sufficient evidence that nothing but gates can be represented. The fact that some of the gates are narrower in the middle comes from their being engraved on seals which are not pure cylinders, but are concave in form. The god, with the horned headdress, standing beside the gate, and holding it with his two hands, is evidently either opening or shutting it. The repetition of the gate on some of these seals means nothing more than the repetition of Gisdubar or the lion on some of the finest seals, as that of Sargon I—it is merely for symmetry, and does not indicate that two gates and two porters are intended. These gates suggest to Ménant (*Cyl. de la Chaldée*, p. 125) the gates of the abode of the dead, as described so vividly in the *Descent of Ishtar into Hades*. She was obliged, as she passed each gate, to strip off one of her garments or ornaments, until she was left naked. Ménant does not see in these cylinders a representation of Ishtar, to be sure; but, as the route is the same for all souls, he finds here an incident in the passage of the soul through some one of these gates, and its submission to a deity, perhaps a god of vengeance, who stands within the gates. The evident objection to this explanation is that in only one of these cylinders, eleven in all, does any representation appear of what can be supposed to be the soul of the dead. We have the porters and the god, but no deceased person.

The god on the other side of the gate from the porter, and therefore outside of it, is more curiously represented than any other deity figured on these cylinders. He is bearded, wears a cap with a horn turned up on each side, and has rays proceeding from his shoulders. These rays are not straight and feathered, like the wheat stalks rising from the shoulders of the god of agriculture, with whom the figure of the plow is associated (see my article, *Am. Journal of Arch.* vol. II, pp. 261–66), but are simple and wavy. On one side, or both sides of the god, is a prominence half the height of his body. If it is single, then the god is lifting one foot very high to mount it (*figs.* 2, 3). If it is on both sides of the god, he is either climbing one, and has his back to the other (as in *figs.* 1, 4), or he has both hands lifted and resting one upon each, as if he were either lifting a weight with each hand, or were pushing

himself up by bearing his weight upon them (*figs. 6, 7, 8*). On some examples, he stands between the two prominences with a hand resting upon one of them, and with his peculiar weapon in the other hand (*figs. 9, 10*). This weapon, if it be such, and not a branch, as Ménant calls it (*Cylindres de la Chaldée*, p. 122), is short, broad, and notched along its whole length, except where held by the handle. In one case (*fig. 8*) an attendant, or armor-bearer, stands beside him holding the weapon, while the god's two hands are engaged. In a single case (*fig. 2*, but compare *fig. 13*), a worshipper, or soul of the dead, is being led by the hand into the presence of the god.

What is indicated by the prominences upon which the god lifts his foot, or on which he rests his hands? In some cases (*figs. 6, 7, 8*) a basket is suggested by the parallel lines across them: but there is no handle by which they can be lifted. A number of other instances make it perfectly clear that they are hills or mountains. The composite character of these prominences, or mounds (*figs. 1, 3, 9, 11*) made up of little mounds, is precisely that which is the familiar style of representing a hilly country in Assyrian art, as often on the bas-reliefs of Koyunjik.

My own interpretation of the scene depicted on these cylinders seems to me so simple and natural that I wonder it did not occur to me at once, and that it has not struck every student. I regard the deity as Shamash, the Sun-god. He has spent the night in the chambers under the earth. The porter has opened the gate to let him out for his day's course. The beams of light are emitted from his body. He rises from between the mountains of Nizir, or of Elam, in the East, or he climbs up their sides. In his hand is a weapon of power.

The people of the East not only worshipped the Sun, but they personified it. The Hebrew writings bear abundant evidence of it: "In them hath he set a tent for the Sun. And he is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; he rejoiceth like a hero to run his road. His outgoing is from the end of the heavens, and his circuit unto their end, and nothing is hid from his heat" (*Ps. xix: 5-7*). So we are told that those that love the Lord are "like the going forth of the Sun in his might" (*Judges, v: 31*). He carries a weapon to smite: "The Sun shall not smite thee by day" (*Ps. cxxi: 6*); "Neither shall the heat smite them, nor the Sun" (*Is. xlix: 10*). When the Sun was conceived as a god, it was as a god resting at night, and coming forth in the morning from the chambers of the East, climbing up over the mountains, and pursuing his course to his setting in the West. All mythologies are

full of this idea which needs no defence. The curious apostrophe to the gates through which Yahveh passed (*Ps.* xxiv : 7-10), "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; lift them up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? Yahveh of hosts; he is the King of Glory," might very well have been adopted from an old hymn to the Sun.

We are fortunately able to support this explanation of these seals by the description of the Sun-god given in the Babylonian hymns that have been preserved.

A bilingual hymn to the setting sun is thus translated by Mr. Pinches (*Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. VIII, p. 167. Cf. G. Bertin; *Revue d'Assyr.* vol. I, p. 157):

"O Sun-god, in the midst of heaven, in thy setting,  
May the bolts of the high heavens speak peace to thee!  
May the door of the heavens be propitious to thee!  
May Misaru (the director) thy beloved attendant, guide thee!  
At Ebara, the seat of thy lordship, thy supremacy shines forth.  
May Aa, thy beloved wife, gladly come to meet thee!  
May thy rest-giving heart rest!  
May the glory (?) of thy godhead dwell with thee!  
O warrior, hero, Sun-god, may they glorify thee!  
O lord of Ebara, may he (the messenger) direct thy straight path!  
O Sun-god, make thy path straight, a straight road for thy beams (?) to go!  
O Sun-god, who judgest the country, of her decisions the director art thou!"

With this is to be compared another hymn to the Sun-god, also translated by Pinches (*ibid.*, p. 168, note):

"Sun-god, in the foundation of heaven thou dawnest, and  
The bolt of the high heavens thou openest.  
The door of heaven opens.  
Sun-god, thou raisest thy head to the lands;  
Sun-god, thou coverest heaven and earth with glory."

Yet another hymn to the Sun-god is thus translated, in part, by Lenormant (*Records of the Past*, XI, p. 193; also *Études Accadiennes*, III, p. 141):

"Great Lord, from the midst of the shining heavens at thy rising,  
Valiant hero, Sun, from the midst of the shining heavens at thy rising,  
In the bolts of the shining heavens at thy rising,  
In the bar of the door of the shining heavens, in . . . at thy rising,  
In the great door of the shining heavens in [thy (?)] opening it."

These hymns are enough to show that the idea of the Sun-god entering on his daily course by passing through the doors of the East, unbarred for his passage, is exceedingly familiar. It was expressed in various forms, in numerous hymns, and was committed to memory and repeated as a prayer, or charm. This fully explains the representation on the seals, the god passing through the door, surrounded by rays, and rising above the Median mountains. The guide Misaru would perhaps be the attendant holding the weapon for the god in *fig. 8*. In the representation of the course of the Sun-god on the famous stone tablet of Abuhabba, the guides are small figures in the sky directing the disk of the Sun with cords. The Sun appears, as is noticed by Thomas Tyler (*Bab. and Orient. Record*, vol. 1, p. 57), repeated under the waters, indicating his passage through the under-world. I venture to repeat the suggestion which I made long ago (*Proceedings of the Am. Or. Soc.*, Oct. 1880, p. xi), that the notched or saw-like object carried in the hand of the god is not a branch, as conjectured by Ménant, but a very archaic weapon of the stone age, like the Mexican *maquahuittl*, being a club armed with flakes of flint set in grooves, as sharp stones are even yet set in Eastern threshing machines. One or two of the Hittite hieroglyphs seem to represent a similar club.

If this identification of the Sun-god be accepted, as I think it must be, it gives the explanation of another series of much more frequent cylinders: I refer to those (*fig. 12*), generally on hematite, which represent a god standing with one foot raised on a low stool, which sometimes takes an animal form, and is frequently imbricated, like some of the hills up which Shamash steps, in the seals we have already considered. In his hand he holds the same notched weapon we have noticed in the hand of the Sun-god or his attendant. In perhaps one case out of five, the god carries a mace or rod, instead of this weapon. In a single case he carries a plow. This god is almost certainly identified by these two marked characteristics, the notched weapon and the lifted foot, which do not appear with any other god. I remember but a single case in which a god otherwise figured carries this notched weapon; and that is the seated god (Lajard, *Culte de Mithra*, pl. I, *fig. 1*) who is not only unique in carrying this weapon, but nearly so in having his shoulders adorned with the Sun-god's waving rays (see Ménant, *Cyl. de la Chaldée*, p. 106, *fig. 60*). Before him stand seven identical divine beings, with horned caps. In this case, the weapon happens to have a projection above the handle, somewhat like the guard between the hilt and blade

of a sword; showing that it cannot be a branch or a feather. It is likely that, in this case also, the Sun-god is represented, accompanied by seven spirits.

I have said that the type represented by *fig. 12* is generally wrought in hematite, although this one is taken from a speckled white and black sienite. A very important cylinder of brown jasper (*fig. 13*) in the possession of M. de Clercq (*Catalogue*, No. 84) connects this type with that which we have first considered. It is probably the oldest example of the type that has come down to us. The inscription on it reads, according to Ménant, apparently endorsed by Oppert: "Kamuma, patesi of Zirgulla, . . . the scribe, his servant." Now, not only is the period of the patesis extremely ancient, but this Kamuma is another reading of Gudea, whose date, if we can trust the chronology of Nabonidus, is more than 3500 B. C. On this seal the god has his foot resting on a mountain, and lifted nearly as high as on *figs. 1, 2, 3, 4*. The imperfection of this cylinder leaves but a portion of the weapon visible. The two figures next to the god represent either the worshipper, or the soul of the dead, perhaps, being led into the presence of the god.

On all these seals of the type of *fig. 12*, the god cannot be any one else, I think, than the same Shamash. With him constantly appears a female personage in flounced dress, with both hands raised in an attitude of respect. Although this same figure appears with one or two other forms of male deities, and has generally been taken to be a worshipper, I cannot but take it to be a female deity, in this case the Sun-god's wife, Aa, who represents one phase of the Moon. The worshippers are generally to be easily distinguished by not wearing the horned headdress: but this female figure wears the same horned headdress as the god. A marked illustration of this appears on the stone tablet of the Sun-god found at Abu-habba. Here the seated Sun-god has four horns to his tiara, and the flounced female figure, which I call Aa, has three. Between them are two evidently human figures approaching the god: they represent the king being led into the divine presence. In further support of these identifications of Shamash and Aa on these frequent hematite cylinders, it is to be noticed that this type carries in a number of cases (as in *fig. 12*) the simple inscription: "Shamash and Aa." It affords one of the few cases in which the inscription gives some clue to the mythological design engraved on the seal. This inscription, however, is found on a few other cylinders which show a seated god. The type of cylinders with Shamash and Aa belong to a period

probably from 1000 to 2000 B. C., and they are considerably later than those which we first considered. I think that, in the earliest period, hematite was not used. The most archaic cylinders are generally of green jasper, basalt, lapis lazuli, or serpentine.

The seals we have studied may give some indication of the local origin of the mythological conception portrayed. The mountains of the East were not visible from Ur, or Erech, or Niffer, or Zirgulla, or Sippara, or Babylon. Did this conception arise in the Eastern highlands, where the Sumerian race and writing are supposed to have had their origin? Or can it be possible that the mounds and canal-banks, which were always the preëminent features of Chaldean scenes, are the hills over which the sun rises? It is certain, from their material, size and shape, that these cylinders go back to the earliest Chaldean period.<sup>1</sup>

New York City.

WILLIAM HAYES WARD.

<sup>1</sup> We have, in the so-called Hittite sculptures, one other example of a god (?) represented as stepping on the mountains. This is seen in one of the figures at Boghaz-keni (Pterion) copied in Texier's *Description de l'Asie Mineure*, also in Perrot's *Galatie et Bithynie*, from which latter it is repeated in Wright's *Empire of the Hittites*, pl. xxiv, fig. 4. In Van Lennep's *Travels in Asia Minor* (vol. II, p. 121) is another copy of the same figure. Whether god or man, he is represented with his feet resting on two unmistakable hills; and in front of him is the divine winged disk, elaborately designed, and combined with other symbols.

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[At the request of Dr. Ward, is added the following Note by Professor MORRIS JASTROW, Jr., Ph.D.]

The opening words of a bilingual Hymn (5 R. 50) lend further weight to Dr. Ward's happy interpretation: *Šamaš ultu šadī rabī ina ašika | ištu šadī rabī šād naḫbi ina ašika | ištu šadī ašar šimātu ina ašika*.

"O Sun! In thy rising out of the great mountain,

In thy rising out of the great mountain, the mountain of fate,\*

In thy rising out of the mountain, the place of destinies."

This passage fully bears out Dr. Ward's view, as embodied in his article, of the relation which the rising sun bore to the mountain, in the mythological system of the Assyrians. Indeed, the first line might serve as an appropriate device for the very seals of which Dr. Ward treats, so perfectly does it correspond to his explanation. It is also worthy of note that, among other ideographic values of the sign for mountain, we find *napḫu* and *nipḫu* "sunrise," and the Assyrian word for mountain, *šadū*, also means "east." The east wind is expressed by the same sign with the determinative for wind.

\* In justification of this rendering of *naḫbu* (strongly favored, moreover, by the *parallelismus membrorum*), compare the uses of the stem *n ḫ b* in Hebrew, viz., "to pierce, to hollow out" (as in Assyrian); then, "to point out, single out," generally in an unfavorable sense; hence, "to doom, curse" (*Lev.* 24: 11, 16; *Numb.* 23: 8; *etc.*), but also in a favorable sense, as the nobles, the "distinguished ones" (*Amos*, 6: 1; *I Chr.* 12: 31). So also in Arabic *naḫīb* means "the chief, the leader."





FIG. 1.—*British Museum*: Material not specified.



FIG. 2.—*Cabinet Royal, Louvre*.

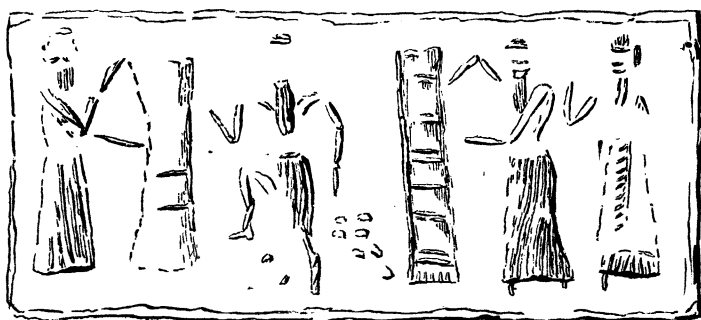


FIG. 4.—*Collection de Clercq*: Basalt.



FIG. 5.—*The Louvre*.

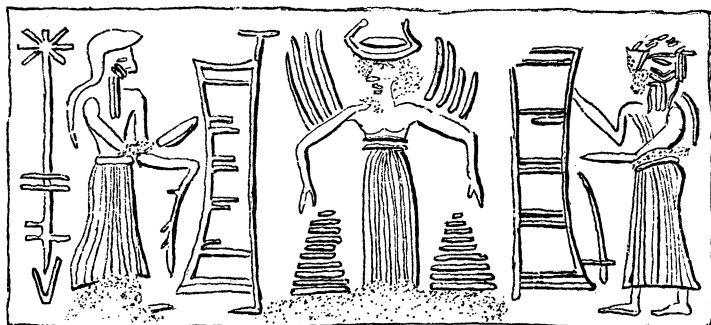


FIG. 6.—*Collection de Palin*: Serpentine.



FIG. 7.—*British Museum*.



FIG. 10.—*Collection of W. H. Ward*: Basalt.



FIG. 13.—*Collection de Clercq*.



*Royal, La Haye: Green jasper.*



*The Louvre: Green jasper.*



*British Museum: Serpentine.*



*Collection de Clercq: Brown jasper.*



FIG. 3.—*The Louvre: "Green marble" (Serpentine ?).*



FIG. 8.—*Cabinet Royal, La Haye: Basalt.*

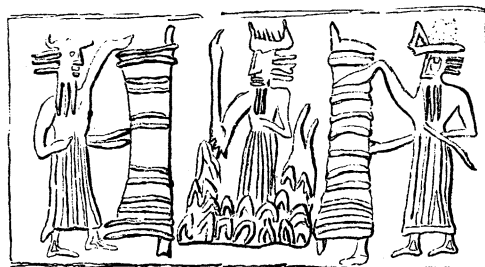


FIG. 9.—*British Museum: Basalt.*



FIG. 11.—*The Louvre: "Green marble" (Serpentine ?) unfinished.*



FIG. 12.—*Collection of W. H. Ward: Sienite.*